

Guardsmen Reach 24-Month Service Cap

By Staff Sgt. Rebekah-mae Bruns
39th BCT Public Affairs

BAGHDAD -- The final round of Oregon National Guard Soldiers who have reached their 24-month service cap for high operation tempo days will return home from Iraq soon. A law enacted by congress shortly after 9-11 limits a national guard or reserve Soldier's active duty obligation to 24 months within a five-year time span. The law was established to help avoid the abuse of reserve forces.

The 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry sent home a total of 60 Soldiers of the 95 who qualified to return to the States. Thirty chose to stay in Iraq while another five were sent back for rehabilitation due to battle injuries.

Battalion commander Lt. Col. Daniel Hendrickson spoke to the Soldiers, during an awards ceremony, and explained that he respected their decisions to leave Iraq.

"You guys have paid your dues on the deployment and on previous deployments - that has earned you the right to go home," he said. "You all have families... and guys, families come first, because they will be here after this career is over."

The Soldiers who qualified to return home served on the Sinai Peninsula as part of a Multinational Observer's Force that was established in a peace agreement brokered by former president Jimmy Carter between Egypt and Israel in 1979. The Soldiers returned to their civilian lives after completing their deployment in Egypt, but were mobilized again eight



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Lt. Col. Daniel Hendrickson (left), gives one of his Soldiers a final salute for his service in Iraq. Soldiers who reached their 24-month service cap were given 'end of tour' awards for their service during Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

months later for duty in Iraq to fill out the 2nd Battalion, which is headquartered in Cottage Grove, Ore.

"This team is known as one of the top two battalions in the 1st Cavalry Division," Hendrickson said. "That's coming from [Division Commander] Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli and [Assistant Division Commander of Support] Brig. Gen.

[Jeffery] Hammond."

Soldiers returning home are expected to arrive in Fort Hood, Texas, within the week, where they will spend five days in a series of debriefings before returning to their families in Oregon.

The rest of the battalion will remain in Iraq to complete its scheduled one-year 'boots on the ground' rotation.

Warrior Poets Share Lyrics and Laughter

By Spc. Al Barrus
122nd MPAD

CAMP AL TAHREER, Iraq -- Free verse and blank verse, rhyme or rhythm, love or pain. Anything goes and all are welcome at Thursday night poetry jams held here at the Scorpion Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Center.

Here, officers, sergeants, Soldiers and civilians share an open microphone and express original or published works of poetry, while others indulge in

the spoken word. A disc jockey accompanies the lyrics with some good vibrations, and Soldiers enjoy free smoothies.

There are no limitations as to how anyone expresses themselves through words, and the artists take advantage of this to express their feelings. The jam begins at 8 p.m., and runs as long as midnight.

A great array of poetry styles fills the room, along with over 100 spectators and performers. Most works were about love.

Staff Sgt. Shawn Smith of 10th Signal Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, signed up to read five of his poems. He writes about how he perceives what love is, and reflects on personal experiences.

"Who can tell what love is? I know not. Some have said that love is a pain. It can distract all divine. While to others who despair, love is a nuisance. To me love is a fire in the course of your soul. It can burn openly, or remain hidden.

It can burn for a short while, or last a lifetime..."

Other love poems were more descriptive in the lust for love, as another staff sergeant read to his highly responsive audience.

"I've been trying to get it together for a long time: trying to give up something that isn't mine. Every time I see that beauty, I say 'For sure, she should be mine.' But as she walks by with that fool you know what I'm about to do. It

Continued on Page 2

Love, Life Main Topics at MWR Poetry Jams

Continued on Page 2

may be foolish, or even suicidal, but I've been this way for so long, I'm a go. I can't put it into idle. So I slip her the ink and a smooch on these lips, and a wonderful smile that can brighten up an eclipse."

Every so often, words speak of matters of life and death, and the dangers of the battlefield. But for the most part, the feeling is a light one, and something to reduce stress.

"At these jams you get to express yourself and tell how you feel and what's going on inside of you," said Smith, who's been writing poetry for 25 years. "It's a stress reliever.

You sit there and think about something and you put it down on paper. If you are having problems with something, it helps you work it out."

Many in the audience come just as spectators just to hear the serene expressions and entertaining rhyme of their fellow Soldiers.

"I come here because I like hearing poetry. I don't write, but I enjoyed it in the states and I enjoy it the same here," said 1st Lt. Monique Morrison, a 353rd Engineer Group intelligence officer. "We always have a good time here. There are new and old faces each night, and we just have fun."



By Spc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD

Soldiers listen to a love poem by Staff Sgt. Shawn Smith of 10th Signal Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, at a poetry jam at Scorpion Morale Welfare and Recreation Center on Camp Al-Tahreer. Every other Thursday evening the center hosts the session, open to any style of poetry.

SAFETY TIP

VEHICLE REGULATIONS APPLY, EVEN IN A WAR ZONE:

- KEVLAR and seatbelts must be worn
- Troop Straps must be in place
- All limbs must be kept inside vehicles
- No smoking in any vehicle
- Speed limits must be obeyed
- Troops will be carried only when troop seats are provided
- Troops cannot be carried with cargo



Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

Where does this road lead?
ilaa ayn yu'addee haazaT Tareeq?

Thursday
High: 57
Low: 36



Friday
High: 64
Low: 43



Saturday
High: 61
Low: 46



Weather information provided by 1CD Staff Weather Office (SWO)

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News Notes

Cat Illegally Earns Masters Degree

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) -- The Pennsylvania attorney general's office sued an online university for allegedly selling bogus academic degrees, including an MBA awarded to a cat. Trinity Southern University in Texas, a cellular company and the two brothers who ran them are accused of misappropriating Internet addresses of the state Senate and more than 60 Pennsylvania businesses to sell fake degrees by spam e-mail. Investigators paid \$299 for a bachelor's degree for Colby Nolan, a deputy attorney general's 6-year-old black cat, claiming he had experience including baby-sitting and retail management.

Wrong Directions Get 11 Jail Time

SANFORD, Fla. (AP) -- Eleven people directed to the wrong courtroom in the Seminole County Courthouse were arrested and jailed when they didn't appear before the proper judge, who was in an adjoining courtroom less than 100 feet away. By the time the 11 finally discovered that they had been misdirected by court personnel and asked to appear before the judge to explain what had happened, he would not see them and ordered their arrests. The six men and five women spent eight hours Friday in a Seminole County Jail cell before everything was straightened out.

There are Some Things People Never Grow out of...



Middletown Journal

Balloonists from the Southwestern Ohio Competition Club light the night sky Monday during the annual Christmas Balloon Glow in Middletown, Ohio.

Trial Set Despite Command Influence Arguments

FORT HOOD, Texas (*Killeen Daily Herald*) -- Pre-trial publicity and negative comments made by President Bush about the abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison were not enough to get Spc. Charles Graner Jr.'s trial dismissed during his pre-trial hearing Monday.

In another blow for the defense, the judge in the case also denied a request to call Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, the former top U.S. commander in Iraq, as a witness.

Charges against Graner include conspiracy to maltreat detainees, assault, committing indecent acts, obstruction of justice and adultery.



Killeen Daily Herald

Spc. Charles Graner walks into a pre-trial hearing at Fort Hood on Monday. He and two other members of the 372nd Military Police Company are facing trial at Fort Hood, accused of humiliating and assaulting prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad.

Defense attorney Guy Womack attempted to persuade the court to dismiss all charges on the grounds of unlawful command influence on potential jury members in the form of statements from influential military leaders.

"The chain of command has stated that they believe Specialist Graner and the others are guilty and deserve punishment," Womack said.

"Those in uniform may be affected by what those officials said," he said.

In the lengthy exchange, Womack suggested even Pohl could have been influenced.

Graner is among seven members of the Maryland-based 372nd Military Police Company accused of assaulting and humiliating male detainees at the Baghdad prison in late 2003. Three of the soldiers are being tried at Fort Hood. Graner was the third to appear before Col. James Pohl.

As the Abu Ghraib prison scandal unfolded, Bush and Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld were quoted as saying the acts of the military policemen were "abhorrent" and "terrible activities."

"If these soldiers are found guilty, they should be punished," Bush said.

During more than an hour of discussion, Pohl noted that nowhere in the statements did Bush or Rumsfeld say Graner was guilty. He agreed to allow discussion of the issue again during jury selection set for January.

Pohl denied allowing Sanchez as a witness, saying the general was too far removed from the situation to give valid testimony.

"We need to hear from people who were on the ground at Abu Ghraib," he said.

Womack argued that Sanchez was essential to his client's defense because he would testify that he "got the ball rolling" on the interrogations at Abu Ghraib prison.

Graner's trial is set for Jan. 7 at Fort Hood. Graner has been assigned to a Fort Hood unit until that date. His attorneys are trying to transfer Graner from Fort Hood to Bethesda, Md., to be with his family for the holidays and go to Bethesda Medical Center for treatment of "nagging injuries."

Coachless Mavs Topple T-Wolves

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) -- Dirk Nowitzki made half of his shots Tuesday night, and it seemed like the other half landed in the hands of his hustling teammates.

Nowitzki scored 34 points, including 23 in the second half, and the Dallas Mavericks had a season-high 24 offensive rebounds in a 97-87 victory over Minnesota that snapped the Timberwolves' five-game winning streak.

"We knew we had to step it up defensively and the biggest key was our rebounding," said Nowitzki, who was 13-for-26 from the field.

"I wish I could sugarcoat it, but we got pummeled tonight," Minnesota coach Flip Saunders said.

Josh Howard had 13 points and 12 rebounds for the Mavericks, who overcame the early ejection of coach Don Nelson and outrebounded Minnesota 54-35 to win for the third time in four games.

"The guys were aggressive, that's pretty much the answer," Howard said. "Every guy stayed with it the whole game."



Dallas Mavericks guard Josh Howard, left, knocks the ball away from Minnesota Timberwolves guard Troy Hudson in the second quarter in Minneapolis, Tuesday.

Nelson wasn't around to see it, but his players out-worked Minnesota for nearly every loose ball. Nelson was ejected by referee Joey Crawford just 93 seconds into the game.

He got his first technical for questioning an offensive foul on Darrell Armstrong and

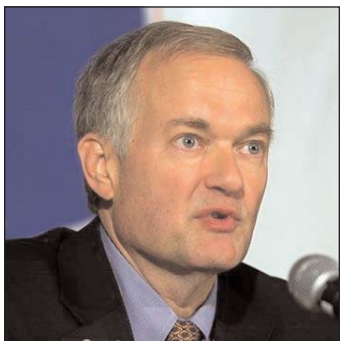
immediately yelled back at Crawford, who quickly added the second technical. Afterward, Nelson admitted to his transgression.

"Oh, I cursed him," he said.

The Mavericks improved to 9-0 when Nowitzki scores at least 30 points.

Players OK New Steroid Agreement Talks

PHOENIX (AP) -- Baseball players gave their lawyers the go-ahead Tuesday to reach an agreement with



owners on tougher testing for steroids. After negotiations with management were outlined to the executive board of the players' association, union head Donald Fehr said the board "authorized us to attempt to conclude an agreement consistent with those discussions."

Commissioner Bud Selig repeatedly has called for more frequent testing and harsher penalties for steroid use, stepping up the intensity following reports of grand jury testimony in a steroid investigation that includes Barry Bonds, Jason Giambi and Gary Sheffield.

Gene Orza, the union's chief operating officer, said Monday that discussions toward a new agreement had advanced but the sides were still apart. Management expects talks to resume next

week. About 40 players were present at the meeting, union spokesman Greg Bouris said.

"I'm happy to see the union come together. We really need to clear up the public perception of what's going on," Oakland outfielder Eric Byrnes said from California in a phone interview Tuesday night. "It's been tough, because we haven't had a voice. The biggest thing is that the public knows it's not as prominent as media and some outside sources are making it out to be."

Fehr defended the current program, saying it would work if "it had been given time."

"The preliminary indications, although I cannot go into details, are that the testing program we had this year had some pretty significant, positive effects," he said.

In Brief

Late Charles Still Making Moves

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Six months after his death, Ray Charles is having a career



year. He's the subject of the biopic "Ray," his posthumous album, "Genius Loves

Company," has become a best seller, and Tuesday, it received seven Grammy nominations; more than any other album by the musical icon. "To see this kind of recognition for him is so gratifying," said John Burk, who produced the album. "It is a bittersweet thing because now he's not here to see it happen." Charles died of acute liver disease June 10 at age 73; "Genius" was released two months later and has become the best-selling album of his career.

Walters Finds Hilton 'Fascinating'

NEW YORK (AP) -- Paris Hilton has been named one of the "most fascinating people of 2004" by Barbara Walters. Walters will host a special on Wednesday, presenting the 10 most intriguing people of the year. Others besides the hotel heiress include filmmaker Michael Moore, "Jeopardy!" champ Ken Jennings and Boston Red Sox pitcher Curt Schilling. In an interview for the show, Walters asks Hilton about the now infamous sex video with her then-boyfriend Richard Salomon. The tape surfaced just before the premiere of Hilton's Fox reality show, "The Simple Life."